

DOUGLAS AN ENEMY TO THE NORTH.

REASONS WHY THE NORTH SHOULD OPPOSE JUDGE DOUGLAS.

SPEECH

OF

HON. ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
OF ILLINOIS.

DELIVERED

AT CINCINNATI, SEPTEMBER 19, 1859.

Mr. LINCOLN commenced with "my fellow-citizens of Ohio," and said that he had never before spoken in "so great a city" as this. [Why, "Old Abe," what will they say to that in Chicago, where you have spoken many times? Don't you know that that is *the* "great city?"] Mr. Lincoln expressed his feelings of embarrassment arising from his appearance in so great a presence. Though no longer a young man, he was embarrassed; but he had always heard that the best way to get rid of embarrassment was to cease thinking and talking about it.

By this time the crowd discovered that there would be no difficulty in hearing Mr. Lincoln, as he spoke with singular clearness of enunciation and deliberation, duly punctuating every sentence as he uttered it. The people were satisfied with the voice, and shifted legs, taking as easy attitudes as could be contrived on the boulders, and listened expectantly. It was rather gratifying than otherwise when he went at once at his "distinguished friend, Judge Douglas"—as it was understood that he was after the Judge, it was well for him to pitch into him without wearisome preliminary.

Mr. Lincoln proceeded to state that Douglas had, as he understood, here as elsewhere, used his humble name in connexion with a sentiment which he had expressed fifteen months ago. He (Lincoln) had at Springfield, Illinois, said that he did not believe the Union would endure forever half free and half slave; a house divided against itself could not stand; the contest between the slave and free labor systems must go on until the country became all one thing, or all another. This saying of his Mr. Douglas had, intentionally or unintentionally,

greatly and constantly misrepresented. He had not meant, and so he had often assured Judge Douglas, that he expected the house to fall. He expected it to stand, and that sometime freedom would prevail everywhere. He had not said that he did not expect any peace until the country was all one thing or all another; but he did not expect peace until the country was satisfied that slavery would spread no further, and was in course of ultimate extinction where it did exist. There was peace in the country when the public mind was resting in the belief that slavery would be no further extended, and was in course of ultimate extinction, and since that opinion had been disturbed there had been no peace.

He had assured Judge Douglas, and he assured the people there assembled, that he had no intention of interfering with slavery where it existed. He had no right to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States, and had no more inclination than he had right to interfere. In expressing this fact in a speech which he made in reply to Judge Douglas in Chicago, he accidentally used the words that he had no inclination to go into the slave States to disturb their institution. Now, Douglas in rejoining passed by the whole substance and tenor of his remarks, and seized upon the single form of expression that he did not intend to go into the slave States to preach abolitionism. No; no, said Douglas, Lincoln knows too much to go *into* the slave States, for there his hide would not be safe, and he would never let his principles endanger his skin. But he (Lincoln) would creep down to the lower edge of the free States, and there would shoot across the boundary at the institution of slavery. Upon this brilliant conceit Douglas greatly plumed himself and harped continually. Lincoln did not consider this a very logical or dignified argument, but he had to get along with it as well as he could.

He believed he was now very near the lower edge of free soil; and if it were true that he was anxious to fire across the river and batter the institution of slavery, he did not know but that the chances were about as good as he ever would have. It was highly probable that he was in the presence of Kentuckians. He did not know but as the night was still his voice might even be heard on the shore of Kentucky. At any rate he proposed to address a portion of his remarks to Kentuckians. He differed with them on the slavery question. He was what they were in the habit of denominating a Black Republican. He believed slavery was a great wrong, morality, sociality, and politically; that it should not be allowed to spread over any more territory; and that it would be well for it to become gradually extinct where it now was. He understood Kentuckians to hold that slavery was a good thing, morally, socially, and politically, and that it should endure forever, and be outspread and cherished as any other good thing.

They should understand each other clearly as to their difference of opinion. Now, he proposed to show them that from their standpoint the Hon. Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, was as sincerely for them as they were for themselves, and more wisely for them than they were for themselves. He repeated this statement, and then proceeded to the demonstration, in which he occupied more than an

hour. What was the great want of the Kentuckians and other Southerners in carrying out their slavery policy? Answer: Northern support. Judge Douglas was the very man who brought them their support. He was the man of the North, pre-eminently the man, who moulded the public sentiment of his section to the uses of the South. He wanted the Southerners to recognise this fact; and he assured them that if there was anything that Douglas said which they did not like, or anything which he omitted to say that they would be glad to have him say, he either said or omitted to say those things which were to them objectionable or desirable, because his usefulness in their service would be impaired if he did not say or did say those things. Now, he (Lincoln) said that slavery was wrong; they (the Kentuckians) said that it was right. Douglas never expressed an opinion on the subject. He never had one word to say as to which it was, wrong or right; and he was the only prominent public man in the Government who had not at some time or other said that slavery was right or wrong. Now, they (the Kentuckians) would be glad to have Douglas go with them and say that slavery was right; but could they not perceive that if he said so he would lose the power of commanding in the service of slavery those who believed it to be wrong? Was not this a fact going to prove the proposition that Douglas was for the South as sincerely as the South was for itself, and for the South more wisely than the South was for itself? If he should take the ground the South would have him take he would lose his capacity to serve that section, and become an unprofitable servant. This was political wisdom that they should appreciate. But, further, Douglas had said on the floor of the Senate that he did not care whether slavery were voted up or voted down in the Territories. This the Kentuckians and other Southerners should take as conclusive evidence that he did not believe slavery to be wrong. If he believed slavery to be wrong, of course he would not be indifferent as to whether it spread further. Mr. Douglas would certainly not be willing to see any thing that he believed to be wrong voted up.

In a speech in Memphis, soon after the late Illinois canvass, Judge Douglas had asserted in substance that God Almighty had drawn a line across this country, one side of which was for free and the other for slave labor. Just where God Almighty had drawn this line Mr. Lincoln had not been able to ascertain. But if, as Judge Douglas said, there was such a line, it followed that God Almighty had set apart a portion of the continent to be improved by slave labor, and that slavery was right, on the soil thus set apart for it. But rights and wrongs could not be divided by geographical lines. If slavery was really right any where, it would be right every where. If it was right on one side of the Ohio river it would not be wrong on the other side. Indeed Douglas' position was, that slavery was right in itself, and that its perpetuation or abolition was simply a question of profit and loss. Was it not plain enough that in the difference between him (Lincoln) on the one side, and the Kentuckians on the other, it was plain that Douglas was wholly on the side of the latter? As an illustration of the vast power with which Douglas was wield-

ing the public sentiment of the North to suit the South, let it be remembered that five years ago there was not a man on the continent of America who had said that the negro had no share in the Declaration of Independance. If there was any man in America who had maintained such a doctrine five years ago he had never heard of him; and if there was any man present who had known that long ago any man had put upon paper such a sentiment, he would be glad now or any time hereafter to be informed with particulars of that fact. Now, it was necessary, in order to be a Douglass Democrat, to hold that a negro was not a man, but a brute; this was the test of Douglass Democracy. Judge Douglass had even in the North accomplished in this respect a tremendous revolution in public sentiment. It would no longer do to admit that a negro was an inferior sort of man; he must be classed among the brutes. Over in Kentucky they were in the habit of proving that slavery was right by the Bible; and perhaps they were indignant at Douglass because he did not resort to that arsenal of Southern argument. But Douglass knew that if the Bible proved, if it proved that slavery was right at all, that it was right to enslave white men. The advancement of such a doctrine as that in the North at least would impair the black slave interest. It would not do to prove to white men of the North that it was right to enslave them. Was not the policy of Douglass for the South wiser than that of the South itself? Again, Douglass was in the habit of enforcing the proposition that there is a contest between the white man and the negro. Douglass was in the habit of saying that where the contest was between the negro and the white man, he was for the white man; and where it was between the negro and the crocodile, he was for the negro. Now, he (Lincoln) believed that there was room enough for all of us, of all colors, to be free. The Douglass doctrine of the necessity of a contest between the negro and the white man was the essence of pro-slavery sentiment of the North. It was the underlying sentiment on which the South could depend in the North. As he (Lincoln) understood the proposition of Douglass, it might be stated in the form of a sum in the single rule of three. As the negro to the crocodile, so was the white man to the negro. As the negro was at liberty to subjugate the crocodile as a reptile, so was the white man at liberty to treat the negro. But there was no necessity for the enslavement of the negro for the comfort of the white race. Slavery was an evil to the white as well as the negro race. It retarded in many ways the development of the whites.

In reviewing the "great principle" of which Judge Douglass has so much to say, Mr. Lincoln pursued the same course of argument and illustration as in his speech at Columbus, of which we have already given an abstract. He said that at Freeport (Illinois) Douglass, in answer to a question which he put, said in so many words that no matter what the Supreme Court of the United States had to say of the abstract question of the right of slavery to go into the Territories, the people could exclude it if they wanted to. But Douglass had never said quite that since. He had said that the Constitution did not carry slavery into a Territory beyond the power of the people legally to control it; but there was a great difference between control-

ling a thing and excluding it; and this difference Mr. Lincoln pointed out. The original proposition of Douglas involved the impudent absurdity that a thing could be legally driven from a place where it might legally remain. As for the power of the Legislature, every lawyer knew that a Legislature had no right to do anything indirectly that it had not the power to do directly. But this "great principle" of Mr. Douglas was precisely adapted to the uses of the South. It did not at last prevent them from planting slavery in the Territories and protecting it by the courts. Douglas had intimated that a Legislature of a Territory might by unfriendly legislation exclude slavery, but he knew that the Supreme Court of the United States stood ready to pronounce any such legislation unconstitutional; and Douglas stood ready to back the court, and was already preparing the public mind to acquiesce in such decision. The Democratic party of the South were brought to that point. If the court should decide, as it would, if the experiment were tried, that the people of a Territory could not through their Legislature or otherwise abolish slavery, Douglas would be the first man to give it up, and say let it go. Could the South fail to perceive the wisdom with which Douglas was making things work together for the extension of slavery? And the purposes of Douglas being distinct, he commended himself to the consideration of the South by his wonderful ability to accomplish his purposes. Witness, for instance, the power with which he brought the most diverse elements together to operate for his return as Senator from Illinois.

Some of the strongest anti-slavery men in the nation were for the return of Douglas to the Senate. Then there was Henry A. Wise, of Virginia, who believed slavery was right, a good and divinely instituted thing, who was using his influence for the return of Douglas. And, as for Kentuckians, there was Crittenden and Breckinridge at daggers' points with each other at home, in favor of the return of Douglas to the Senate, and writing letters into the State to produce that effect. (Mr. Lincoln spoke of Crittenden as a man he loved with as deep and devoted an affection as he had ever entertained for any man, more in sorrow than in anger; but the intervention of Crittenden in the local affairs of Illinois, contrary to the great principles of non-intervention and popular sovereignty, was evidently a sore point for the gentleman.) It was probable that Messrs. Crittenden, Breckinridge, and Wise, and the anti-slavery men, who were not mentioned by Mr. L., might have believed themselves engaged in using, or capable of using, Mr. Douglas; but the general appearance of things was that Douglas had used them. Could the South fail to mark this singular capacity of Mr. Douglas to bring and bind together diverse elements and bend them to his purposes? And there was another reason why the South should cleave unto Douglas, and give him its confidence and the Charleston nomination. If they did not nominate him they would be beaten; that was certain. Without Douglas defeat was inevitable. Now, the Republicans intended to beat them anyhow if they could, and he thought they had a pretty fair chance to do so. But they were not going to be too impatient on the subject, not in too big a hurry. If they could not beat the Douglas De-

moeracy of the North and the united South now, they would do it another time. And Mr. Lincoln would tell the Kentuckians what they intended to do with them when they were beaten. They would treat them as brothers, as citizens of the Republic, with as many rights as anybody, and no more. They would treat them as Washington, Jefferson, and Madison had treated them, and bring back, if possible, the spirit of fraternity and unity which distinguished the whole country in the better days of the Republic. The Republicans, as victors, would abide by the compromises of the Constitution, and treat the men of the South as men with as good hearts in their bosoms as there were in the world, and whose differences from the men of the North were occasioned by circumstances. The Republicans would treat the men of the South as equals under the Constitution; and whenever they got a chance would invade their domestic circles and marry their girls—a thing which he had once done. They were told, however, that if a Black Republican was elected to the Presidency the Union would be dissolved. Well, he would inquire of the Kentuckians and Southerners in general what they would do with their half of it? Would their peculiar property be more safe when the North was released from all obligations of every sort to return it whenever it escaped?

What advantage would or could it be to slavery to have the Union dissolved? Would the men of the South make war upon and subjugate the North? He thought that would not answer. The men of the South were good soldiers, but no better than those of the North, and there were not so many white people in the South as there were in the North. Hence the conquest of the North by the South hardly seemed probable. In fact he thought it would be better for the South to remain in the Union, under a Black Republican President. There were sundry reasons for believing so. And a Black Republican President there certainly would be, if Douglas were not the Charleston nominee, and perhaps even in 1860, in that very contingency. The Douglas principle of squatter sovereignty, the South should consider, opened the way indefinitely to the extension of slavery. The same principle which allowed slavery in the Territories, if the people pleased, would re-open the slave-trade with the people of Africa, if the people so please. He would defy any man to show that, if it was right to take slaves into the Territories, it was wrong to import them from Africa. This principle, then, should find favor in the eyes of the South. But his Kentucky friends would tell him that Douglas had written a letter against the re-opening of the slave-trade, saying that he was unalterably opposed to the revival of the trade in negroes with the coast of Africa. But Douglas based his opposition upon the presumption that it was one of the compromises of the Constitution—that of terminating the slave-trade at a particular time. It was not, however, in any sense a compromise of the Constitution. By the same process of reasoning that Douglas showed the suppression or termination of the slave-trade one of the compromises of the Constitution, he could show the ordinance of '87 to be a compromise of the same sort. But the South should recollect the style of observance of the compromises for which Douglas was distinguished. It was a fact

susceptible of easy explanation, that just about the time that the South would desire to commence the practical work of importing negroes, Douglas would be ready to put any embarrassing compromise quite out of the way. In 1849 Douglas had declared the Missouri compromise a sacred thing, against which no ruthless hand would ever dare be raised. In exactly four years and a quarter after making that declaration, Douglas destroyed that compromise ruthlessly. Was it not reasonable to suppose that in the same length of time he would be ready to ruthlessly or otherwise destroy his newly-discovered compromise of the Constitution? The South might trust Douglas for that. Whenever the South wanted earnestly to begin the work of the importation of slaves, Douglas would be with them.

Judge Douglas had at Columbus ridiculed the idea that the ordinance of '87 had anything to do with the preservation of freedom in the Northwest. On this point Mr. Lincoln reviewed the notions expressed by Mr. Douglas very thoroughly and at great length. He said that freedom might have triumphed in the Northwest without the prohibitory ordinance; but there could be no question but that ordinance was of great service in protecting the land from the contamination of slavery. It left the people unembarrassed by the pressure of slave property. They had no trouble in abolishing it, and no difficulty in compensating the slave owners for their property. And it was a remarkable fact that all the territory which was covered by the ordinance of '87 was free, while south of the Ohio, where the ordinance did not prohibit slavery, there was slavery everywhere. There were portions of the territory of Ohio further south than portions of the State of Kentucky, yet Ohio was all free and Kentucky was all slave. This was not the effect of climate. There was no reason in nature for the existence of slavery in Kentucky that was not applicable to Ohio.

The people of Indiana had petitioned for the abrogation of the ordinance of '87, that they might have slavery, and it was denied them. But he was not aware that from that fact the people of Indiana had any cause to complain of the tyranny of the General Government. The States of Illinois and Missouri were settled about the same time, and were admitted into the Union not far distant from each other. The southern half of Illinois and the northern half of Missouri were in the same latitude, and Illinois, protected by the ordinance of '87, was all free, while Missouri, unprotected by prohibitory legislation, was all slave.

But in Illinois there had been for a great while a few slaves in the old French settlements; and the presence of slavery, even in so small a degree, had been made strongly manifest in the formation of the laws of the State, showing the remarkable powers of the presence of the peculiar institution, productive of great embarrassments and evils. These facts Mr. Lincoln placed against the assertions of Senator Douglas that the States of the Northwest were free owing to the operations of the principle of popular sovereignty, and not owing to the wise prohibitory regulation of our fathers.

Mr. Lincoln concluded by giving his views of the policy that should be pursued by the Opposition in 1860 in the national contest. The

Opposition must give expression to the Republican sentiment. The central idea of that opposition was resistance to the spread of slavery. Any attempt to ignore the legitimate Republican sentiment must be ruinous to the Opposition. If an attempt were made to make battle with the National Democracy on any platform not recognizing and affirming hostility to the spread of slavery, it would cost fifty thousand votes in the State of Illinois. There were wise and good men in the South whom he would cheerfully support at either end of the ticket; but it was necessary to make the fight against the policy of the extension of slavery. He indicated a preference for some Southern man as a candidate for President or Vice President. The pro-slavery party must be showed that the Republicans, in opposing the aggrandizement of slavery, were friends of the Union and promoters of the general public good.

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